



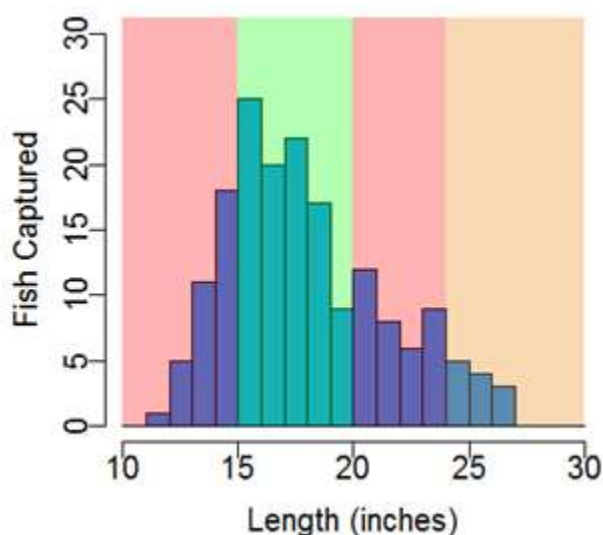
## Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Round Lake, Sawyer County, 2016

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Round Lake from April 24-29, 2016 to assess the adult walleye, muskellunge, northern pike, black crappie, and yellow perch populations in the lake. Ten nets were set overnight for five nights which resulted in 50 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey conducted on May 25, 2016 documented the status of smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and non-game species but also provided information on juvenile walleye. Four miles of shoreline were shocked. Quality, preferred, and memorable sizes referenced in this summary are based on standard proportions of world record lengths developed for each species by the American Fisheries Society.

**Walleye (Adult)**



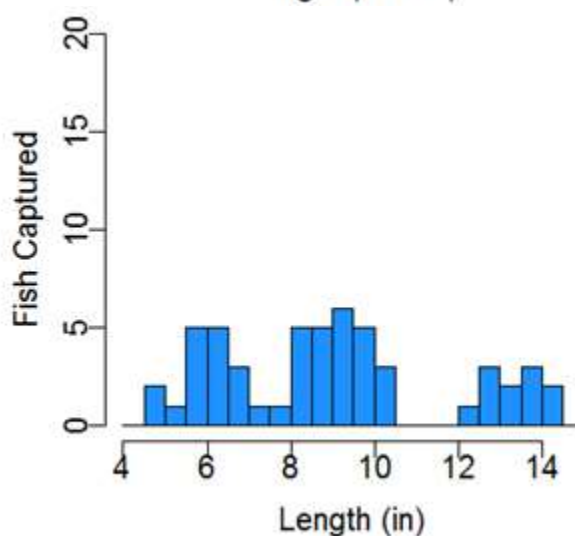
Captured 4 per net-night $\geq 10$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 15$ "	80%
Preferred Size $\geq 20$ "	27%



**Walleye (Juvenile)**



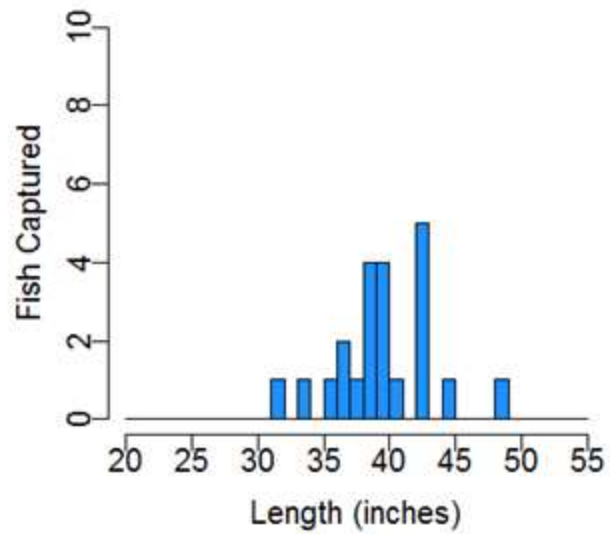
Captured 13 per mile  $\leq 10$  inches



### Muskellunge



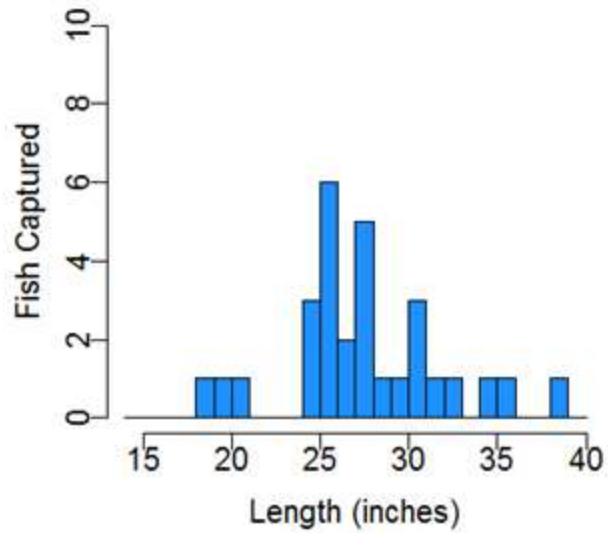
Captured 0.4 per net-night $\geq 20$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 30$ "	100%
Memorable Size $\geq 42$ "	32%



### Northern Pike



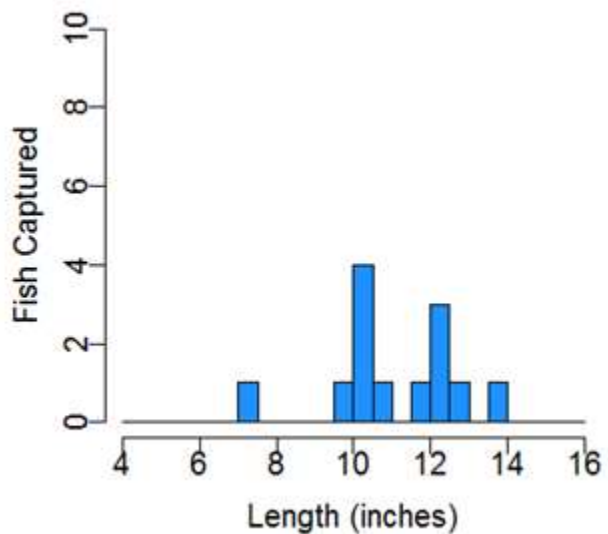
Captured 0.6 per net-night $\geq 14$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 21$ "	90%
Preferred Size $\geq 28$ "	34%



### Black Crappie



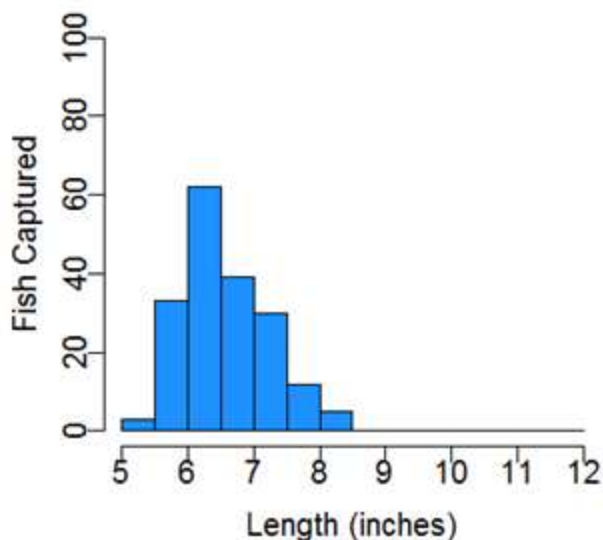
Captured 0.3 per net-night $\geq 5$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8$ "	92%
Preferred Size $\geq 10$ "	85%



### Yellow Perch



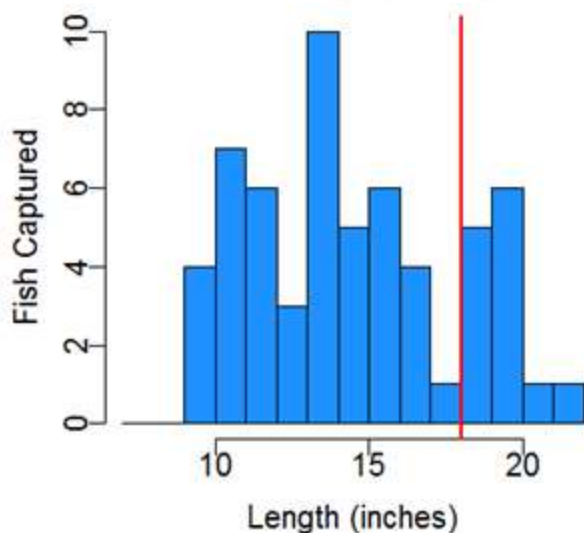
Captured 4 per net-night $\geq 5$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 8"$	3%
Preferred Size $\geq 10"$	0%



### Smallmouth bass



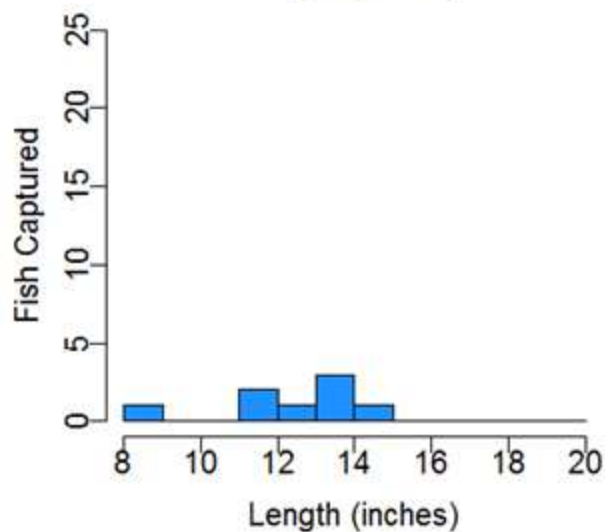
Captured 15 per mile $\geq 7$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 11"$	81%
Preferred Size $\geq 14"$	49%
Memorable Size $\geq 17"$	24%



### Largemouth bass



Captured 2 per mile $\geq 8$ inches	
Quality Size $\geq 12"$	62%
Preferred Size $\geq 15"$	0%



## Summary of Results

Round Lake is a 3,294 acre seepage lake in central Sawyer County with a maximum depth of 74 feet. The substrate is mostly sand and gravel with several weedy bays throughout the lake. The water in Round Lake is exceptionally clear which makes for both a unique and challenging fishing experience.

The timing of the netting survey would not be considered ideal for any species. Water temperature during the time nets were in Round Lake hovered in the 45-47F range which is a little too warm for walleye (post spawn) and a little too cool for muskellunge (pre-spawn). Nonetheless, we captured reasonable numbers of those species and others, enough to characterize size structure if not necessarily abundance.

The Round Lake walleye population shows a good mix of sizes with 53% of fish in the harvest slot of 15-20 inches (shown in green above) and good numbers of fish both above and below that range. We also captured some fish over 24 inches which had not been common in the past. In addition to a mix of adult sizes and year classes, we detected two moderate-size year classes (from 2014 and 2015) during our electrofishing survey. The continued presence of natural reproduction should help maintain a fishable population of walleye in Round Lake for years to come. Provided that walleye in Round continue to reproduce at an adequate rate no walleye stocking is needed.

Muskellunge stocking in Round Lake had been halted or reduced for a number of years but was resumed in earnest in 2006. The muskellunge population is showing steadily improving size. In the 2013 survey the largest fish captured was 45 inches, while in this 2016 survey it was nearly 49 inches. Round Lake is known to have the potential to grow trophy muskellunge and appears to be in the process of doing so once more.

Northern pike exist at a low density in Round Lake which is the preferred state. At such a low density pike reach excellent size, with 34% of the pike captured in our survey being over 28 inches. It is not clear why northern pike do not overpopulate Round Lake like they do in many other area lakes, but as long as that remains the case Round will be an excellent destination for big pike as well as other species like muskellunge.

Black crappie, similarly, are at a low density. As a result, size is excellent with many fish over 10 inches. The capture rate for crappie in this survey is considerably lower than expected, likely a result of the cool water temperatures.

Yellow perch are not particularly abundant, nor are they of good size in Round Lake currently. The factors leading to poor overall perch production are not clear but are being investigated, starting with an analysis of perch growth rates.

Smallmouth bass are a true stand-out in the Round Lake fish community. Smallmouth in Round Lake are both abundant and have excellent size structure. This is a special population that was recently given additional protection by increasing the size limit to 18 inches and reducing the bag limit to 1 per day. Even though harvest of 1 smallmouth is allowed during the open season, anglers are encouraged to practice catch and release to help maintain this excellent fishery.

Largemouth bass are considerably less abundant in the main parts of the lake, though they are more abundant in some of the shallow weedy bays and in Little Round. Our survey in 2016 did not encompass those areas.



A big Round Lake pike that was captured during the 2016 netting survey. Photo by Max Wolter.

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